

Quality of petrol and diesel fuels

1996/0163(COD) - 13/10/1998 - Final act

OBJECTIVE: to reduce polluting emissions from cars by means of the introduction of new environmental specifications relating to petrol and diesel fuels. COMMUNITY MEASURE: Directive 98/70/EC of the European Parliament and the Council relating to the quality of petrol and diesel fuels and amending Directive 93/12/EEC. CONTENT: the Directive is part of an overall strategy to reduce air pollution from road transport. It follows on from the undertaking in Directive 93/12/EC which provided for the subsequent adoption of target values resulting in a substantial reduction in motor vehicle emissions after the year 2000. The Directive lays down the environmental specifications applicable successively (from 1 January 2000 and from 1 January 2005) to fuels for vehicles with positive-ignition (petrol) engines and compression-ignition (diesel) engines. The marketing of leaded petrol will be prohibited after the year 2000. As far as unleaded petrol and diesel fuel are concerned, the Directive provides for the progressive improvement of their environmental quality. Environmental specifications will be applicable from the year 2000 and 2005 successively. The Council has fixed the lead content of petrol at 0.15 g/l maximum, the benzene content at 1%, the sulphur content at 150 mg/kg and aromatics at 42% (Annex I). By way of derogation to the general provisions of the Directive, the Member States may, in certain specific cases, continue to authorise the marketing of petrol or diesel fuels that do not comply with the Directive.

Derogations are authorised for: - leaded petrol: until 1 January 2005 at the latest, on condition that the Member State submits a request to the European Commission by 31 August 1999 based on severe socio-economic problems or reasons to do with health or the environment, taking account, among other things, of the climatic situation in that Member State; - sulphur content in unleaded petrol and diesel fuels: until 1 January 2003 and to 1 January 2007, depending on the case, on condition that the Member States submit a request to the Commission by 31 August 1999 and 31 August 2003 respectively containing proof of severe industrial difficulties. The marketing of small amounts of leaded petrol after 1 January 2000 will be permitted for use in certain vintage vehicles. The Member States may impose more stringent specifications with a view to protecting the environment or the health of the population in a specifically environmentally sensitive area. To do so, they have to submit a reasoned request in advance to the Commission, which will then take a decision in the absence of a decision to the contrary by the Council. The Member States will monitor compliance with the environmental specifications of fuels using analytical methods defined in the Directive. The Commission will promote the development of a uniform European system for fuel quality monitoring. The Commission shall periodically and, for the first time by 31 December 1999, submit proposals for a revision of this Directive in the light of any new developments. The Directive provides for a regulatory committee which limits the powers of the Council in favour of the Commission. Limit values may only be modified by means of the co-decision procedure. ENTRY INTO FORCE: 28 December 1998. DEADLINE FOR TRANSPOSITION: 1 July 1999.